

National Aeronautics and Space Administration
Headquarters
Washington, DC 20546-0001



April 19, 2013

Reply to Attn of: General Law Practice Group

TO: Distribution

FROM: Alternate Designated Agency Ethics Official

SUBJECT: Determination Regarding Attendance by NASA Employees at the Space Policy Institute Events on May 6-8, 2013

On May 6-8, 2013, the Space Policy Institute of George Washington University's (GWU) Elliott School of International Affairs, a not-for-profit organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service Code, will hold three days of formal programming in and around the the Lisner Auditorium, George Washington University, Washington, D.C., from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. These sessions, entitled the "Humans to Mars Summit," will bring experts together from around the world to discuss the technical, scientific, and policy challenges of sending humans to Mars in the near future. Approximately 500 people will be in attendance. Attendees will include personnel from NASA and other federal agencies, congressional staff, media, STEM educators and representatives from foreign embassies, industry, the entertainment community, and academia. In addition to very light morning refreshments and coffee, receptions totaling around \$50 per person will be held in conjunction with the event.

I find that the event meets the requirements of a "widely attended gathering" as defined in 5 C.F.R. § 2635.204(g)(2) as there is an Agency interest in having NASA personnel attend the event because it will further Agency programs or operations. Attendance at the event will allow NASA attendees to exchange information on NASA's programs and policies. Accordingly, NASA employees whose duties do not substantially affect the sponsor, including NASA employees in non-career positions who are required to sign the ethics pledge under Executive Order 13490, may accept an invitation for themselves and an invited guest for free attendance.

However, NASA employees whose duties may substantially affect the event sponsor, such as by way of procurement duties, should seek an individual determination pursuant to 5 C.F.R. §2635.204(g)(3)(i) regarding participation in this event from their local ethics counselor.

We understand that gift items may be handed out at the conferences. Attendees are reminded of the \$20 gift exception at 5 C.F.R. §2635.204(a), which provides that employees may accept gifts valued at no more than \$20 per occasion (and no more than \$50 from one source in a calendar year). Moreover, if companies that are lobbying organizations provide gifts during the event, NASA employees in non-career positions who are required to sign the ethics pledge under Executive Order 13490 must decline those gifts regardless of value.

Adam F. Greenstone